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canvas. The general color-scheme cannot be relieved successfully by the occasional blotches of light contributed by such discussions as that of the "benefactions of the rich" or "happier marriages". The moralistic rather than the economic attitude is the prevailing one. The total impression, a false one, in the judgment of the reviewer, although it is the traditional one, is conveyed in the last paragraph of the book. The Roman Empire "taught its prosaic commercialism to all its provinces. . . . Its citizens served Mammon in the place of God with more than usual consistency. The power they worshipped carried them a certain way—then delivered them over to their own rottenness and to the resistless enemy." In fact the title of the book is a misnomer. For there are many topics such as those upon the education of the lower classes and upon the Roman guilds (pp. 228–229 ff.) which have little connection with the subject indicated by the title.

Should not the organized commercialism of the empire be handled, not as something black and wrong, but as the necessary economic basis for the myriad activities of that great empire? A thorough assimilation of Eduard Meyer's point of view in his sketch of the *Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Altertums* would have modified Professor Davis's views upon the "social stigma" attaching to manual labor, which is an idea set by ancient academic treatises. The work of Gummerus in the fifth supplement of *Klio* leads to the conclusion that it was exactly the small farmer, at least in Italy, who was *not* "almost economically independent".

The last chapter—Some Reasons Why the Roman Empire Fell—is the weakest portion of the work. One cannot seriously consider the deaths in gladiatorial combats as an appreciable drain upon the population of the empire (p. 327). It is futile to blame the ancients because they did not make physical inventions, and confound the barbarians "by learning how to combine sulphur, nitre and charcoal". The author's weakness in interpretation of economic material and grasp of economic problems is most apparent in this chapter. Had Professor Davis confined himself to the lesser task of a series of pictures out of the economic and social life of the empire, the weakness would not have been so fundamental.

W. L. WESTERMANN.

The Roman Empire: Essays on the Constitutional History from the Accession of Domitian (81 A. D.) to the Retirement of Nicephorus III. (1081 A. D.). By F. W. BUSSELL, Fellow and Tutor of Brasenose College, Oxford, Rector of Sizeland. Volumes I. and II. (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1910. Pp. xiv, 402; xxiii, 521.)

"THE purpose of the following essays, written for the use of the general reader and modern politician, is to add a modest contribution

to the interpretation of the imperial system." In the author's opinion the study of history is "a remedy against the hasty opportunism of amateurs who know only the surface of their own age and none of the hidden causes that have produced it". Those who limit themselves to recent times operate in too narrow a field to be able to discover its general characteristics and tendencies; and it is mere folly to imagine that in the past half-century the world has so improved as to be able to derive no instruction from the study of the Roman Empire. In fact, he continues, remarkably striking parallels can be drawn between the political and social conditions of the world to-day and those of the earlier centuries of our era; and the comparisons do not always redound to the glory of the present. From the author's point of view the principate came into being because the people did not want to govern themselves. The *princeps* did not construct the imperial system irresponsibly but as a representative of the popular will, silently though none the less forcibly expressed. His rule was pacific and parental. He was never "intimidated into the enormity of class legislation", and under him the interests of the people were better protected, Mr. Bussell declares, than they are now under a party government, whose perpetual condition is civil discord and alternate injustice. The growth of absolutism answered to a popular demand. The emperors did not encroach but were invoked. The provinces made no attempt to escape the yoke but regretted the protection when it was withdrawn.

The author's sympathies are all with the *princeps* in his conflict with the senate, in the gradual creation of a centralized monarchy. Domitian systematically followed this policy. Diocletian, embodying in the constitution the tendencies of the previous century of revolution, abolished the idea of delegation and responsibility, and substituted in their stead the sacrosanctity of the monarch and the principle that "the king never dies and can do no wrong." Constantine added the hereditary principle. Thus these emperors created the absolutism of the modern type.

The causes of decline were principally pestilence, the curial system, and slavery. The universal lapse of interest in municipal affairs compelled the emperor to undertake the local administration through a bureaucracy, which he was unable to control. It is the present custom, the author remarks, to denounce the bureaucracy and the excessive taxation of the late empire. But while taking this attitude we should not overlook the fact that the whole tendency of modern states is in these same directions. If many emperors benevolently strove to better the condition of the people by interference in municipal affairs and in the discouragement of local and personal initiative, no different is the aim of present socialism.

Somewhat against his will the author finally admits that Caesarism, though incomparably superior to the modern Parliamentary system, and a potential refuge from the dangerous equilibrium of modern democracy, is not an ideal form of government. Representative and laudable as it

is, "Caesarism, like modern socialism, denies maturity and freedom, and is at once a cause and symptom of decay."

Enough has been said to indicate the spirit and method of the work. It contains more political theory than real history. The author's bias is pronounced and his subjectivity extreme. But he fully appreciates the tentative character of such treatment. The style, thrown off from a warm imagination, has a magnificent sweep, though it is sometimes obscure. Few "politicians" in America will read the work; and of those persons who actually attempt it, many will doubtless be amazed at the author's wholesale arraignment of modern government and society. It is safe to say that his conclusions will not find wide acceptance; yet the amount of truth in his comparison between the Roman world and the present is enough to set the reader a-thinking.

GEORGE WILLIS BOTSFORD.

BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

Deutsche Geschichte. Von DIETRICH SCHÄFER. Erster Band: *Mittelalter*. Zweiter Band: *Neuzeit*. (Jena: Gustav Fischer. 1910. Pp. ix, 469; x, 505.)

IN spite of one or two shortcomings with which we shall deal presently this is by far the most important work covering German history in short compass that has yet seen the light. With a sure hand Schäfer traces the political and religious development of the nation from the earliest times down to the actual present, going into all the ramifications, recoiling before no difficulty, and neglecting no one period. He is independent in his judgments, is always moderate and dispassionate, and gives the interrelation of events in a way that will earn the gratitude of all who seriously busy themselves with the subject. The book is not for beginners and would scarcely be of service to those who have not enjoyed at least the historical training afforded by the German schools.

It is a *tour de force* to crowd the history of eighteen hundred and more years into half that number of pages and no two writers would solve the problem in the same way. Schäfer economizes space by conciseness of style and also by almost entirely eliminating military history. For instance he disposes of the six great battles of the fall of 1813 in thirteen lines and does not even mention by name the battles fought in France in 1814. In this neglect of military details he goes at times too far, as when he fails to mention the defection of the Saxon troops in the midst of the battle of Leipzig, although to that defection French historians ascribe the defeat that drove Napoleon out of Germany. Schäfer is equally Spartan in his neglect of dramatic incidents, referring only casually to the famous throwing out of window that was the beginning of the Thirty Years' War and to the death of Wallenstein.

There are other omissions that will strike many as less pardonable—omissions, indeed, which the author defends in his preface. Economic